

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of preventing reduction of sales amount of records due to a digital music file illegally distributed
5 through a communication network, comprising:

a)collecting an illegally produced digital music file, which is derived from a record of a cooperating record corporation, by searching the network;

b)encrypting the collected digital music file with a
10 predetermined key; and

c)redistributing the encrypted digital music file through the network.

2. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein at step
15 a) and c) the collection and distribution of the digital music file are performed by using a popular digital file sharing program.

3. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein at step
20 a) and c) the collection and distribution of the digital music file are performed by using a popular digital file sharing server.

4. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein at step
25 b) the collected digital music file is encrypted by a public

key encryption algorithm.

5. The method as set forth in claim 2, wherein at step
b) the collected digital music file is encrypted by a public
5 key encryption algorithm.

6. The method as set forth in claim 3, wherein at step
b) the collected digital music file is encrypted by a public
key encryption algorithm.

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7. A method of preventing reduction of sales amount of
records due to a digital music file illegally distributed
through a communication network, comprising:

a)collecting an illegally produced digital music file,
15 which is derived from a record of a cooperating record
corporation, by searching the network;

b)inserting a watermark containing a predetermined secret
information in the collected digital music file; and

c)redistributing the watermarked digital music file
20 through the network.

8. The method as set forth in claim 7, wherein at step
a) and c) the collection and distribution of the digital music
file are performed by using a popular digital file sharing
25 program.

9. The method as set forth in claim 7, wherein at step
a) and c) the collection and distribution of the digital music
file are performed by using a popular digital file sharing
5 server.

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